

WISCONSIN ENDANGERED RESOURCES REPORT #134
STATUS OF THE TIMBER WOLF IN WISCONSIN
PERFORMANCE REPORT 1 JULY 2005 THROUGH 30 JUNE 2006
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SUMMARY

This report covers activities conducted from 1 July 2005 through 30 June 2006, on wolf conservation in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin DNR reclassified wolves from endangered to threatened in 1999 and delisted wolves to protected wild animals on August 1, 2004. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service downlisted wolves to threatened on 1 April 2003, but, a federal district court ruling on 31 January 2005 caused Wisconsin wolves to be re-listed as endangered. In March 2006 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began a new process to delist wolves in the Great Lakes region. The 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan determined wolf management in the state and this report follows the outline of the wolf plan to describe wolf management activities.

Twenty-three wolves were live-captured, and 17 were fitted with radio collars in 2005 in 15 different packs. Seventy-two radio tagged wolves were monitored during the study period. Mean territory size was 32.4 square miles for 18 adult wolves. The minimum count for the wolf population in winter 2005-2006 was 465 to 502 wolves in 115 packs, and included 449 - 485 wolves outside of Indian reservations. Twelve wolves being actively monitored, died during the period from the following mortality factors: 3 from disease, 4 shot, 1 apparent poisoning, 1 vehicle collision, 2 euthanized at depredations and 1 from unknown trauma. A total of 85 wolves were found dead in Wisconsin and included death from the following: 5 disease and infection, 1 drowning, 1 other wolves, 12 shot, 1 poisoned, 18 vehicle and train collisions, 36 euthanized at depredation sites, 4 unknown trauma, and 7 unknown. Mange caused most mortality from disease and was detected on 1 of 8 wolves examined in 2005. Reports of wolf observations were received from 50 Wisconsin Counties. Forty-four cases of wolf depredation on domestic animals occurred during the study period, and included death of 38 cattle, 1 horse, 16 dogs, and injury to 4 calves and 7 dogs. Forty-one wolves and 3 wolf-dog hybrids were live-trapped from farms, and 35 wolves and all hybrids were euthanized, plus nonlethal methods were used on many farms. Various other strategies for implementing the 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan were also conducted during the period.

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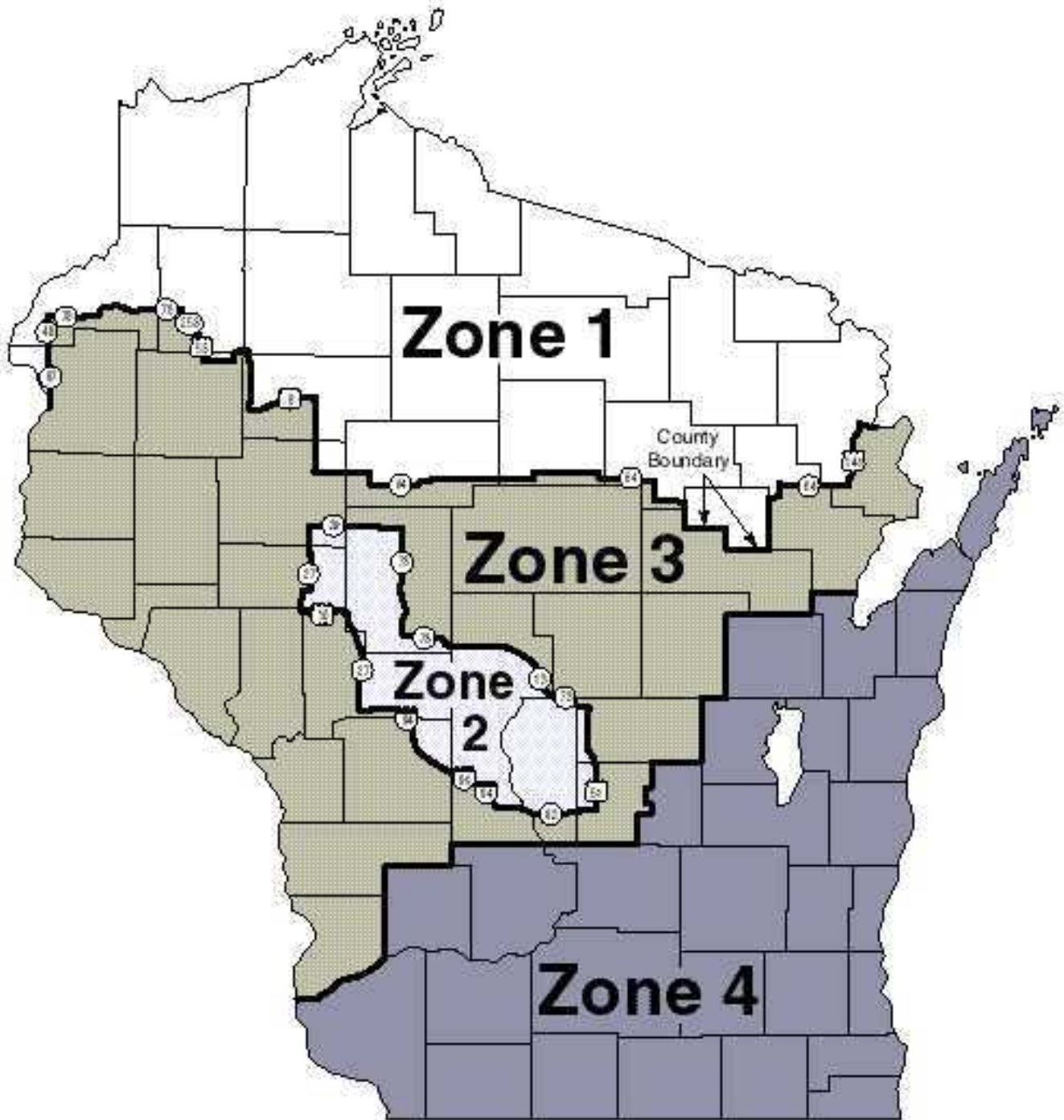


Figure 1. Wisconsin Wolf Management Zones as established by the 1999 State Wolf Management Plan.

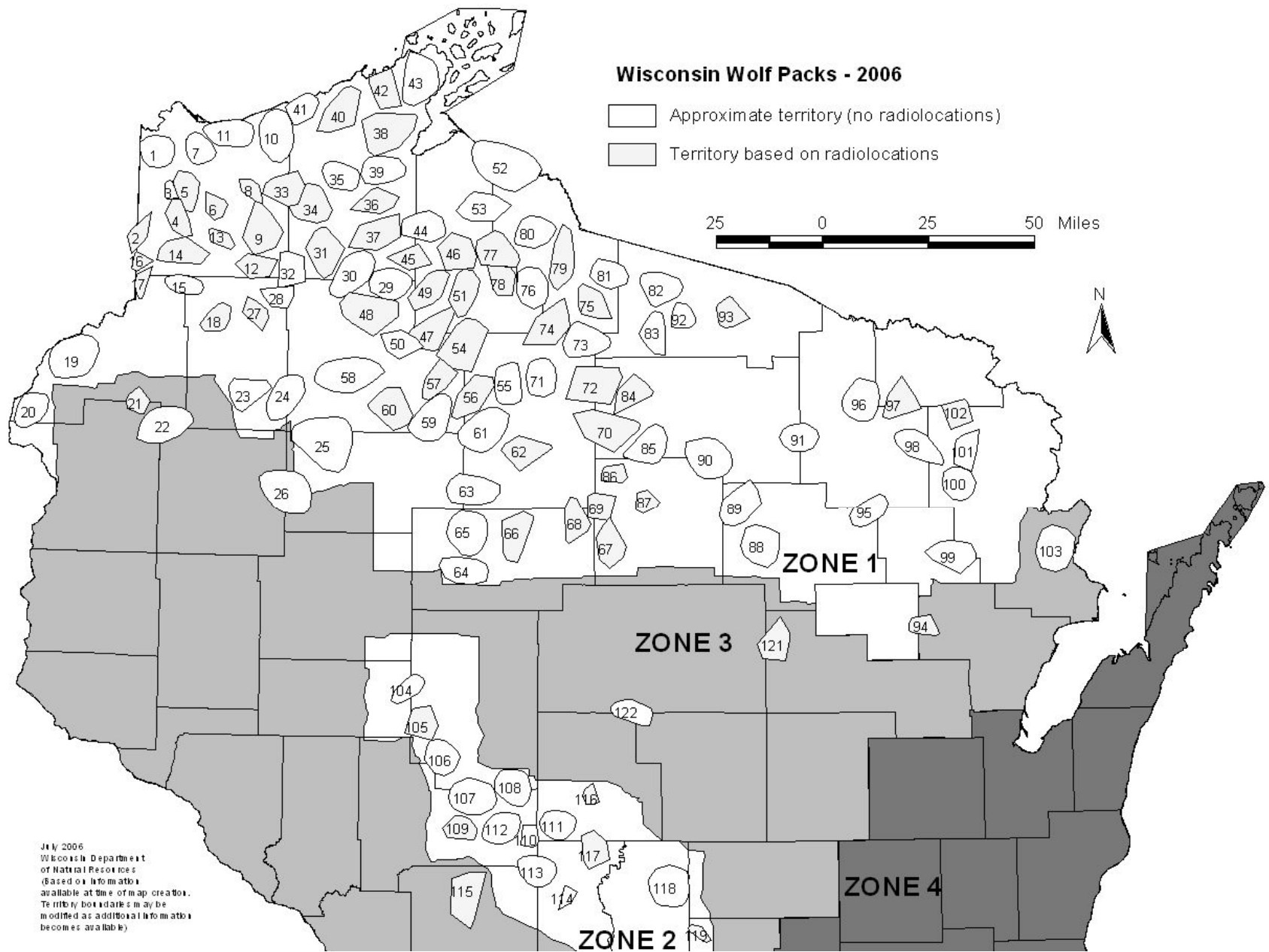


Figure 2. Gray Wolf Distribution in Wisconsin: Winter 2005-2006 (Refer to Tables 3 & 10)

Figure 3. Changes in Wisconsin Gray Wolf Population: 1980-2006

